

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MARICOPA COUNTY ATTORNEY

RICHARD M. ROMLEY



Date: August 22, 2000

For More Information Contact:
Bill FitzGerald – 506-3170

WEST TEMPE JUSTICE COURT CONSTABLE RESIGNS

Constable Mark T. Hamblen of the West Tempe Justice Court, who admitted that he obstructed the administration of justice by failing to perform his official duties, resigned his elected post today.

Maricopa County Attorney Rick Romley, "The resignation of Constable Hamblen will benefit the citizens of Maricopa County. Constable Hamblen failed to perform his official duties including not serving summonses relating to criminal cases. His incompetence endangered the community by delaying the administration of justice in criminal cases. He did not serve the public as he was sworn to do."

At the request of former Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert D. Myers, the County Attorney's Office undertook a review of the performance of Constable Hamblen's official duties. On March 13, 2000, upon completion of that review, the County Attorney's Office requested that the court issue an order directing Constable Hamblen to explain why he should not be found in criminal contempt for willful and reckless non-compliance with his statutory duties. Among the allegations made against Constable Hamblen was between May 1, 1999 and November 30, 1999, he failed to complete the service of summonses, subpoenas or notices relating to approximately 101 criminal cases.

On May 17, 2000 before Superior Court Judge Ronald Reinstein, Constable Hamblen admitted, "That because he failed to do his duty that he obstructed the administration of justice in the West Tempe Justice Court." On June 6, 2000 following Constable Hamblen's admission, Judge Reinstein imposed a \$750.00 fine, issued orders requiring Constable Hamblen to perform his official duties and appointed an independent monitor to oversee his conduct.

Upon being informed by the independent monitor that Constable Hamblen was not following the orders of Judge Reinstein, the County Attorney's Office requested a hearing to determine whether or not Constable Hamblen should be incarcerated for violation of the court's order. Prior to the hearing, which was to be held today and heard before Judge Reinstein, Constable Hamblen tendered his resignation as the West Tempe Justice Court Constable.